

A vintage-style microphone is the central focus, set against a dark background. To the left, a bright lightning bolt strikes a silhouette of a person's head in profile, suggesting a powerful voice or inspiration. The microphone has a classic grille and a circular dial on the handle.

Slinging the Word

Janet Kuypers
poetry collected for the
WordSlingers Radio show
WLW Chicago Radio 88.7 FM

octd 2008 chapbook



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poetry read at WordSlingsers,
the WLUW Chicago radio show (88.9 FM)
03/16/08

Chicago, West Side

she knew who they were coming for

she crouched in front of the window
straddling her chair she moved from the corner
her coffee sat in the window sill
the condensation rising, beading

on the window right about at her eye level.
she took the side of her index finger
periodically and smeared some of the
water away to look into the streets.

the snow was no longer falling on the
west side of Chicago; it just packed
itself darker and deeper into the ground
with every car that drove over it.

she gunshot was ringing in her ear
still. it was so loud. the earth cried
when she pulled that trigger. let out
a loud, violent scream. she could still

hear it. for these few moments, she had to
just stare out the window and wait. she
didn't know if she should bother running,
if it mattered or not. she couldn't think.

all she knew was that this time, when
she heard the sirens coming from the
streets, she'd know why they were coming.
she'd know who they were coming for.

Gift of Motherhood (part one)

*We need only think of how the gift of motherhood
is often penalized rather than rewarded
even though humanity owes its very survival to this gift
Certainly, much remains to be done
to prevent discrimination against those
who have chosen to be wives and mothers*

*Letter to Women, Message of His Holiness
POPE JOHN PAUL II, July 10*

“he started in on me again last night,
he had too much to drink, and came home,
drunk, and started yelling at me. he
got home at ten-thirty but wanted to know
why his dinner wasn’t warm. and he wanted
to wake up the kids and play with them,
but i told him it was a school night and
they needed a full night’s rest. i swear,
i can’t tell anyone else this, i have to
keep telling everyone i fell down the
stairs and i burned myself when i was
cooking dinner and i tripped over one of
the kids’ toys or a vase from the book-
shelf i was cleaning fell and hit me in
the face. i’ve come up with a lot of
excuses, i know. but what would the kids
do if i lost him? how could i work and take
care of them? how would they be able to
go to college? i know i keep making up
excuses, but i have to. for the kids.”

Thank You, Women Who Work (part one)

*Thank you, women who work
In this way you make
an indispensable contribution
to the growth of a culture
which unites reason and feeling,
to a model of life ever open
to the sense of "mystery"*

*Letter to Women, Message of His Holiness
POPE JOHN PAUL II, July 10*

Thank you, women who work
because you take on the responsibilities of men
while still having to be mothers, wives
good little daughters and feminine creatures

Thank you, women who work
because you are the ones we can blame
when the family falls apart

Thank you, women who work
because you make a point to do more
than your fair share
without being paid fairly
even though
no man would do the same for you

Thank you, women who work
for you know you have to prove yourselves
over and over and over again
and that it still isn't enough, so
keep up the good work,

ladies

Coslow's

I am back
at my old college
hang-out

years later

sharing some beers
with an old friend

then i remember
being there
with a friend
who used to
work there

she told me about the
women's bathroom

in all my years
I had never
been there

she said
women write on the wall
at the left
of the stall
women write
that they've been raped

they name names

there were arrows
pointing
to other women's
messages
saying
"i've heard this before"

first names
last names

when she told me
of this
years ago
i walked in
read the names
and wrote down one
of my own

i forgot about that wall
until now
and i am back
just yards away
from the
bathroom door

i get up
walk
open the door
years later

all the names are still there
jake jay josh larry matt scott

i can even still see
my own writing
it didn't take long
to find it

Look, over here, in my living room.
You left an empty bottle of beer
on the end table. The cap, too.
And come here, follow me, over here,
in the kitchen, look in here, see,
you left some of your food in the pantry.
A box of spaghetti, some canned
tomatoes. And come here, in the bathroom,
I know you probably won't notice this,
but here, this towel, it smells like
you, is smells like your shaving cream.

Why did you have to go. Why
does this have to seem so hard.

All These Reminders

Okay, look here, the remote for the
television is on the arm of the chair,
where you always leave it. And the cocktail
table, it's pushed forward on one side
because you'd always rest your feet
on it. Everywhere I look around me,
I see something that you affected.
I look in the kitchen. I look in the
dining room. I look in the mirror.

Why did you do this to me. Why
couldn't you have made a clean break.
There's still some of your messages
scribbled on scraps of paper next to
the phone in the kitchen. And look,
the pillow on the couch is bunched
up because you could never get
comfortable with it. And over here,
the phone books are out on the
kitchen counter, you never put them
away, and here they are, still sitting
out, I'll have to put them back in the
cabinet. and look here, why do I
still have all of your love letters
stuffed into a drawer in my desk.

When you left me, why did you
have to leave me all these reminders.

**She Told
Me Her
Dreams
(one)**

we were at some sort of showing
some sort of exhibit
where they were displaying the glass

sculpture, it was eighty-three
billion years old, and it was
more smooth than anything

and it went on and on, one smooth
curve after another
it was so old

they displayed it on the water
was it a lake, or the ocean
it rested on the water, religiously

and I was in the water with someone
a man, I don't know who
and we were swimming around it,

touching it
he was on the other side, told
me to swim under it

I didn't think I could make it across
but I went under, across I went

I kept feeling the sides, the smoothness
somehow, transcribed along the
sides of the sculpture, was a
time line, a record of history

there's wasn't much at eighty-three
billion years ago, but there was
more and more the closer we got

to present

I remember reading Lyndon
Johnson's name, and then I saw

information about the future
it was all on the glass, I was
looking at it, but I can't remember

what it says

Childhood Memories (one)

I was in the basement, the playroom
that's where all my toys were, you see

and I had just run in there
after yelling at my family
sitting in the living room
"I hate you"

now, I've never said that before to
my family, nor would I ever say
it again I knew better

and I had just run into the playroom
slammed the door shut
I couldn't have been more than five

and I ran in, and I looked for things
to put in front of the door so they
couldn't open it and find me

I took one of my chairs
from my little play set
and dragged it over to the door

then I took the little schoolhouse for
Fischer-Price toys, the side opened
up, it had a blackboard and everything
I took that little schoolhouse, put it
on the chair guarding the door
patiently obeying my orders

I was running around looking for
something else I could carry
to the door
when I heard the door knob turn
and my sister, with one arm
pushed all of my toys away
and opened the door

I knew I had been defeated

Christmas Eve

we made dinner
fettuccini alfredo
with chicken and duck

vegetables
bread

we ate
couldn't finish everything

we were putting on our coats
getting ready to go
to midnight mass

i decided to pack up
our leftovers
give them
to some homeless people
on the main street

we got in the car
and drove
to broadway and berwyn

i got out of the car
walked over to a man there

asked him if he was hungry

i got the bowl of noodles
and the gallon of milk
out of the car
another man walked over to me

i told them to promise
that they would share

i got in the car
we were just driving

and all i could think
was that these two men
were in the cold
eating pasta with their fingers

on Christmas Eve

Flooded War Memories

it was st. patrick's day,
went to another country to see you

met up with you at a hotel
it was like we were never apart

we talked like old friends,
old war-time veterans

who fought in a war together
who shared our life stories

while sitting in a trench together
waiting for a bomb to strike

it was st. patrick's day,
and everything seemed normal
and right

even though you lived far away
and even though we had different
life plans

it was st. patrick's day,
i remember you laying down

in the bath tub, like a little boy,
splashing and playing in the water,

not even flinching that i was there
talking to you, naked in the tub

it was st. patrick's day,
i wanted to get out, see the town

and you didn't want to move
content in a dingy hotel room

all i could think was that
it was st. patrick's day,

and i was in another country,
i wanted to get up and go

and i don't know what snapped
in you on st. patrick's day,

but i was in a dress, ready to go,
and you knocked me down

i remember being knocked on to
one of those hotel beds

in my panty hose and dress,
and you strangled me

it was like you were in the war again
and you were fighting to the death

but i thought we were on
the same side

why are you trying to hurt me

and like a bull dog that finally listened
to the commands of their master,

you finally stopped, and
there i was, your ally,

the one that sat in the trenches
with you all those years ago

torn panty hose, bloody knees

i never thought you'd fight
one of your buddies, i swear

*

i got out and called for back up
in the hotel lobby

at the pay phone an older woman
came up to me, asking
if i was all right

her question stopped me
from hyperventilating

i looked down at my torn hose,
bloody knees

and I said,
i'm fine

*

i just knew i had to get out of there
before more shells fell

There I Sit

there I sit

I sit alone
separated
isolated
away from my only love
my obsession

I pull out
a fountain pen
I look
at the lines
the contours
of his face

defining
the piercing
eyes
the pointed
nose
the tender
lips

I feverishly
draw
I sketch
I capture
his image

I stare
I gaze
I memorize his every detail
but he never looks back

so I will draw
until my
fountain pen
runs dry

other Horizons

I live in the basement
it's all I can afford
nothing grows there

but I would have a little plant
at my office desk
every morning
water it watch it grow

I'd take on all those tasks
I'd even have my own partition

I live in a room
with no view
but I don't need one
no oceans, no skylines

when I make it
I'll look out the window
at the whole damn city

Signs of the Time

The president says it's okay
to be gay, as long as you don't
tell anyone. Suburban husbands
are murdering doctors who work
at abortion clinics, because they
saved the world from a mass murderer.
Nineteen children are found in a
freezing apartment alone, sharing
one bowl of food on the floor with
a dog. People walk to the churches,
see Mary's statue crying. One lone
man in New York hears the voice
of God through his dog and kills.

Were the children saved from the
murderer, were they sharing their
food with God were they crying

Conversations, A Day of Grieving, 01/22/04 (v)

i am a teacher
i teach high school in the suburbs

it's not like the city
there aren't gangs and drugs
but it's so stressful

i also try to counsel my students
one girl
pregnant by her boyfriend
got an abortion

that night
he raped her

that was his present to her
after she aborted his baby

what do i say to her

and what do i say
every day
when i see
the rapist

he's a student
in my seventh hour class

this week alone
i did two suicide interventions
i counseled two teenagers

how am i supposed
to go to sleep at night

i sit in bed
awake
and worry

About the Author

Janet Kuypers has a Communications degree in News/Editorial Journalism (starting in computer science engineering studies) from the UIUC. She had the equivalent of a minor in photography and specialized in creative writing. A portrait photographer for years in the early 1990s, she was also an acquaintance rape workshop facilitator, and she started her publishing career as an editor of two literary magazines. Later she was an art director, webmaster and photographer for a few magazines for a publishing company in Chicago, and this Journalism major was even the final featured poetry performer of 15 poets with a 10 minute feature at the 2006 Society of Professional Journalism Expo's Chicago Poetry Showcase



She sang with acoustic bands Mom's Favorite Vase, Weeds and Flowers and the Second Axing, and does music sampling. Kuypers is published in books, magazines and on the internet around 9,300 times for writing, and over 17,800 times for art work in her professional career, and has been profiled in such magazines as Nation and Discover U, and was nominated as Poet of the Year for 2006 by the International Society of Poets. She has also been highlighted on radio stations, including WEFT (90.1FM), WZRD (88.3FM), WLWU (88.9FM), WSUM (91.7FM), WLS (8900AM), Q101 (101.9FM), the internet radio stations ArtistFirst.com, chicagopoetry.com's Poetry World Radio and Scars Internet Radio (SIR). She has also appeared on television for poetry in Nashville and Chicago, and was interviewed on her art work on Urbana's WCIA channel 3 10 o'clock news.

Inducted as a Poetry Ambassador during Poetry Month in 2006 & 2007, and nominated to be Poet of the Year in 2007, Kuypers turned her writing into performance art on her own and with musical groups like *Pointless Orchestra*, *5D/5D*, *Order From Chaos* and *The Bastard Trio*, and starting in 2005 Kuypers ran a monthly iPodCast of her work, as has morphed her Internet radio station (JK Radio) to become a part of Scars Internet Radio (SIR) — she even runs the Chaotic Radio show (an hour long Internet radio show) through BZoO.org and chaoticarts.org. She has performed spoken word and music across the country — in the spring of 1998 she embarked on her first national poetry tour, with featured performances, among other venues, at the Albuquerque Spoken Word Festival during the National Poetry Slam; her bands have had concerts in Chicago and in Alaska; in 2003 she hosted and performed at a weekly poetry and music open mike (called "Sing Your Life"), and from 2002 through 2005 was a featured performance artist, doing quarterly performance art shows with readings, music and images.

Kuypers has had 43 books of poetry, prose and art published, including three collection books in 2004, *Oeuvre* (poetry), *Exaro Versus* (prose) and *L'arte* (art). For a list of all books, visit <http://www.janetkuypers.com>.

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Janet Kuypers

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Books: Hope Chest in the Attic , the Window, Close Cover Beofre Striking , (Woman.) , Autumn Reason , Contents Under Pressure , the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism) , Changing Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blisters, Etc., Oeuvre, Exaro Versus, L'arte, The Other Side, The Boss Lady's Editorials, The Boss Lady's Editorials (2005 Expanded Edition), Duality, Seeing Things Differently, Change/Rearrange, Death Comes in Threes, Moving Performances, Six Eleven, Life at Cafe Aloha, Creams, Rough Mixes, The Entropy Project, The Other Side (2006 Edition), Stop., Sing Your Life, The Beauty and the Destruction, cc&d v167.5 (Writing to Honour & Cherish, editor edition), Blister & Burn (the Kuypers edition), S&M, cc&d v170.5 Distinguished Writings editor edition, Living in Chaos, Silent Screams, Taking It All In, It All Comes Down, Rising to the Surface, Galapagos,

Sulphur and Sawdust , Slate and Marrow, Blister and Burn , Rinse and Repeat , Survive and Thrive, (not so) Warm and Fuzzy, Torture and Triumph, Oh., the Elements, Side A/Side B, Balance, Chaos Theory, Writing To Honour & Cherish, Distinguished Writings, Breaking Silences, Unlocking the Mysteries, the Book of Scars, We The Poets, Life on the Edge, Revealing all your Dirty Little Secrets, Infamous in our Prime, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art , the Electronic Windmill , Changing Woman, the swan road, the Significance of the Frontier, The Svetasvatara Upanishad, Harvest of Gems, the Little Monk, Death in Málaga, Memento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.I.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Remnants and Shadows, I Saw This, the Drive, Thoma at Tea, Crashing Down Nineteenth

Compact Discs: *Mom's Favorite Vase* the demo tapes, *Kuypers* the final (MFVInclusive), *Weeds and Flowers* the beauty & the desolation, *The Second Axing* Something is Sweating, *The Second Axing* Live in Alaska, *Pettus & Kuypers* Live at Cafe Aloha, *Pointless Orchestra* Rough Mixes, *Kuypers* Seeing Things Differently, *SD/SD* Tick Tock, *Kuypers* Change Rearrange, *Order From Chaos* The Entropy Project, *Kuypers* Six One One, *Kuypers* Stop., *Kuypers* Masterful Performances mp3 CD, *Kuypers* Death Comes in Threes, *Kuypers* Changing Gears, *Kuypers* Dreams, *Kuypers* How Do I Get There?, *Kuypers* Contact•Conflict•Control, *the DMJArt Connection* the DMJArt Connection, *Kuypers* Questions in a World Without Answers, *Kuypers* SIN, *Kuypers* WZRDRadio (2 CD set), *Mom's Favorite Vase* and *The Second Axing* These Truths, *assorted artists* String Theory, Oh (audio CD), *Life At The Cafe* (3 CDset), *DMJArt Connection* Indian Flux, *DMJArt Connection* Manic Depressive or Something, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #1, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #2, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #3, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #4, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #5, *Chaotic Radio* the Chaotic Collection Collection #01-05 (5 CDset) etc. (audio CD, 2 CDset), *Chaotic Elements* (2 CDset), *Chaos in Motion* (6 CDset).